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** To succeed in artificially MODIFYING by irradiation CERTAIN HEREDITARY CHARACTERISTICS of ornamental plants or market-garden or cereal products in such a way as to obtain, for example, flowers with exceptionally decorative colours, green peas of above-average productivity or potatoes resistant to mildew; these are some of the aims pursued by the scientists of the Association Euratom/ITAL (Instituut voor Toepassing van Atoomenergie in de Landbouw).

About a hundred scientists, representatives of agricultural institutes, nurserymen, etc., from the Community will hold an information meeting at Wageningen, in the Netherlands, on 5 November 1970 at which they will be informed of the results already obtained by plant mutagenesis and turned to practical use.

A short note on this subject will be found in ANNEX 1.

For further information please apply to the

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** After the agreement reached by nine non-member countries (Austria, Britain, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) to enter THE SECOND STAGE of the work directed towards EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION together with the Community countries, the high-ranking officials representing the 15 European countries concerned will meet in Brussels on 19 October next as agreed (see "Research and Technology" No. 61) in order to organize the following matters:

- (a) the initiation of forward studies with a view to defining the future needs of Europe as regards telecommunications and passenger transport between large conurbations;
- (b) the undertaking of market studies and technical feasibility studies in those sectors where such studies are recognized as necessary (computer science and hovercraft);
- (c) the preparation of texts of intergovernmental agreements, to be ready for signature within a few months, of all the other cooperative projects which are already more advanced.

This stage of the work should lead to a meeting of the ministers responsible for research in the 15 countries concerned, possibly towards the end of this year or at the beginning of 1971.

At the same time the Community's Working Group on Scientific and Technical Research Policy (Aigrain Group) is continuing its comparison of the research plans and programmes of the Member States. At its next meeting, to be held in Brussels on 21 and 22 October, the Group will also study the available machinery for aid to the Community's technological development and the means of strengthening the solidarity of Member States with respect to non-member countries.

** A total of 198 workers in the Community's iron and steel industry lost their lives as a result of industrial accidents in 1960, i.e., one in 2 500. In 1967 this figure fell to 104, or one in 4 000.

In 1960, 102 686 accidents involving stoppages were recorded, entailing the loss of 1 735 370 working days. Seven years later only 1 206 785 days were lost as a result of 66 628 industrial accidents. At the same time, however, the number of days lost per accident rose from 16.9 to 18.1.

These figures are taken from the first report of the GENERAL BOARD ON SAFETY IN THE IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY appointed by the Commission of the European Communities. ANNEX 2 contains a short note on the work of this Board, which is to form the basis of the discussions of some 500 persons from 15 different countries who will attend a colloquium on the prevention of industrial accidents which the Commission of the European Communities is holding in Luxembourg on 21-23 October.

** Replying to a written question from Mr Oele, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, on the STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION BETWEEN CERTAIN EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT COMPANIES (see "Research and Technology" No. 60), the Commission of the European Communities recently issued the following statement:

"A group of representatives of the aircraft industry from the firms of VFW-Fokker (Germany), Fokker-VFW (Holland), Fiat (Italy), Sabca (Belgium) and Dassault (France) has forwarded a memorandum to the Commission of the European Communities concerning certain problems facing the aircraft industries of the EEC member countries. In this memorandum, after analysing the difficulties which this industry is encountering, the authors make certain suggestions concerning, in particular, coverage against economic risks, exchange risks and credit policy.

The Commission is at present examining these different suggestions and their compatibility with the principles set out in the EEC Treaty.

While emphasizing the need for closer cooperation between enterprises engaged in this sector within the Community, the memorandum sent to the Commission does not deal with the problem of how such cooperation is to be organized, nor with the question of possible mergers".

- ** The section of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities which specializes in economic questions met in Brussels on 7 October 1970 and set up a study group to examine the Commission's memorandum on the COMMUNITY'S INDUSTRIAL POLICY (see "Research and Technology" No. 48) and the Commission's proposal for the creation of a EUROPEAN JOINT STOCK COMPANY (see "Research and Technology" No. 62).

- ** A colloquium on the HEALTH ASPECTS OF THE IRRADIATION OF FOODSTUFFS will be held by the Commission of the European Communities at Luxembourg on 27-28 October 1970. It will enable information to be exchanged on the experience gained, and on the same occasion it will be possible to examine the programmes due to be carried out in the various Community laboratories engaged in studies on the identification of irradiated foodstuffs.

- ** In a note which it has just forwarded to the Council of Ministers of the Community, the Commission confirms that the Treaty of the European Economic Community is APPLICABLE TO THE PART OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OVER WHICH THE MEMBER STATES EXERCISE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS. It applies, for example, to the sovereign rights exercised for the purposes of the research and exploitation of natural resources and to freedom of establishment; it also applies to natural resources extracted from the Continental shelf and to the installations and facilities employed there.

The Use of Nuclear Techniques in Agricultural Research

To succeed in artificially modifying by irradiation certain hereditary characteristics of ornamental plants or market-garden or cereal products in such a way as to obtain, for example, flowers with exceptionally decorative colours, green peas of above-average productivity or potatoes resistant to mildew; these are some of the aims pursued by the scientists of the Association Euratom/ITAL (Instituut voor Toepassing van Atoomenergie in de Landbouw), otherwise known as the Netherlands Institute for the Agricultural Applications of Nuclear Energy, Wageningen.

Since time immemorial man has tried to improve food crops and ornamental plants. For some time now the study of the applications of nuclear energy has proved that this can be done by altering the hereditary characteristics of plants by means of X-ray, gamma or neutron irradiation.

Under an association with Euratom, ITAL has since 1961 devoted a great deal of research work to this question, both at Wageningen and through a number of subcontracts awarded to other specialist bodies in the Community. Some of the work done at Wageningen itself has related to the development of methods of using mutagenesis to obtain cultivated plants of interest to horticulturalists, producers of ornamental plants, nurserymen and breeders. Selection by mutation offers particularly interesting possibilities, and it is not rare for the modification of one of the ornamental characteristics to lead rapidly to a marketable innovation.

Although the results of the work done have been the subject of numerous publications, it appears that their commercial exploitation has hitherto been mainly confined to the Netherlands.

In order to provide interested circles in the Community with more detailed and complete information on the results whose commercial possibilities have now been demonstrated, the Steering Committee of the Euratom/IT&L Association has decided to organize an open day at Wageningen itself on 3 November next. About a hundred scientists, representatives of agricultural institutes, nurserymen, etc., will thus have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the practical results obtained with ornamental plants.

Industrial Safety in the Community's Iron and Steel Industry

A total of 198 workers in the Community's iron and steel industry lost their lives as a result of industrial accidents in 1960, i.e., one in 2 500. In 1967 this figure fell to 104, or one in 4 000.

In 1960, 102 686 accidents involving stoppages were recorded, entailing the loss of 1 735 370 working days. Seven years later only 1 206 785 days were lost as a result of 66 628 industrial accidents. At the same time, however, the number of days lost per accident rose from 16.9 to 18.1.

These figures are taken from the first report of the General Board on Safety in the Iron and Steel Industry appointed by the Commission of the European Communities. Apart from these statistical aspects the report presents a complete rundown of the Board's activities from its creation in 1965 up to the end of 1969.

In 1964, in agreement with the wishes expressed both by the European Parliament and the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the professional organizations of the steel industry, a Board was created to carry out studies on industrial health and safety and to promote exchanges of experience with a view to reaching conclusions applicable in industrial practice. Each Community country was to be represented by four members, including one representative of the national professional organization of the steel industry, one representative of a major company, and two delegates of professional workers' organizations (NB: a British observer was also present).

Thus constituted, the General Board on Safety in the Iron and Steel Industry set up various working groups which have published a number of studies covering the following fields:

- the organization of prevention (the protection principles defined have also been adopted outside the Community, in particular in Britain, Spain and Sweden);
- access to the cabin of a travelling crane;

- individual protection of the smelter;
- installations for the maintenance and repair of gas conduits;
- etc.

In collaboration with the International Information Centre for Industrial Safety and Hygiene created by the International Labour Bureau, the Board also is preparing a series of bibliographies, the first of which will concern noise in the steel industry.

The most recent testimony to the determination of the Commission of the European Communities to pursue a policy of active and direct information in the field of health protection for workers in the steel industry is the colloquium on safety in the steel industry to be held this month in Luxembourg.